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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/652,396	08/31/2000	Toshio Kobayashi		2870

7590 10/18/2002

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EXAMINER

COLE, ELIZABETH M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1771

DATE MAILED: 10/18/2002

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.	Applicant(s)
09/652,396	KOBAYASHI ET AL.
Examiner	Art Unit
Elizabeth M Cole	1771

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 September 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-5 and 7-9 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-5 and 7-9 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____

2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____. 6) Other: _____

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1. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In claim 9, it is not clear how a pattern of protuberances, (which are three-dimensional), can be two dimensional.
2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 4-5, 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 373,974 to Manning et al in view of Adam et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,573,841 and Benson et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,914,084. Manning et al discloses a method of making a nonwoven fabric comprising the steps of forming a slurry of pulp fibers and thermoplastic fibers, depositing the fibers to form a wet sheet and hydraulically entangling the fibers. The fibers may have the claimed dimensions and are present in the claimed proportions. A nonwoven fabric would inherently have apertures. Manning et al differs from the claimed invention because Manning et al does not disclose the weight percent of fibers in the slurry. Adam et al teaches that in forming a fibrous slurry that the slurry should contain about 0.01 to 1.5 percent by weight of fibers. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have formed the slurry of Manning et al so that it comprised 0.01 to 1.5 percent by weight of fibers. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to use to form the

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slurry so that it comprised 0.01 to 1.5 percent by weight of fibers because Adam teaches that this amount of fibers is conventional when forming a web by the wet-laid method. Neither Manning et al nor Adam et al teaches that the hydroentangling step should also form protuberances on the nonwoven fabric. Benson et al discloses that hydroentangled nonwovens may be embossed on rollers comprising one roll with protuberances and one smooth roll. See col. 9, lines 62-67. Benson teaches that embossing helps to stabilize the nonwoven. The embossments are disposed in a pattern. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have embossed the nonwoven of Manning. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to emboss the nonwoven of Manning in order to texturize it and also to stabilize the fabric as taught by Benson.

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 4-5, 7-9 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elizabeth M. Cole whose telephone number is (703) 308-0037. The examiner may be reached between 6:30 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday.

Mr. Terrel Morris, the examiner's supervisor, may be reached at (703) 308-2414.

Inquiries of a general nature may be directed to the Group Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

The fax number for official faxes is (703) 872-9310. The fax number for official after final faxes is (703) 872-9311. The fax number for unofficial faxes is (703) 305-5436.

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Elizabeth M Cole

Elizabeth M. Cole
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1771

e.m.c
October 17, 2002